

CLAIMS

1. A method of setting the voice personality of a voice service site, wherein a set of voice
5 personality characterisers associated with a previously-visited voice service site is used in
presenting the voice output of a currently-visited voice service site.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the voice service sites operate by serving, from
voice page servers, voice pages in the form of text with embedded voice markup tags to a
10 voice browser, the voice browser interpreting these pages and carrying out speech
recognition of user voice input, text to speech conversion to generate voice output, and
dialog management; the voice browser being disposed between voice page servers and the
user and managing which set of voice personality characterisers is used during the ext to
speech conversion.
- 15 3. A method according to claim 2, wherein text to speech conversion at the voice browser
is effected using a voice tract model, said voice personality characterisers being parameter
values of this model.
- 20 4. A method according to claim 2, wherein text to speech conversion at the voice browser
is effected by the concatenation of speech elements such as phonemes, allophones,
diphones or the like, these latter forming said voice personality characterisers.
5. A method according to claim 2, wherein the set of voice personality characterisers has
25 associated permissions regarding use of the set for presenting the voice output of voice
sites; the voice browser reading and complying with these permissions.
6. A method according to claim 2, wherein the previously-visited site specifies
permissions regarding use of the voice personality characterisers associated with the site,
30 for presenting the voice output of other sites; the voice browser reading and complying
with these permissions.

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7. A method according to claim 2, wherein the currently-visited site specifies permissions regarding the use of sets of voice personality characterisers associated with other sites, for presenting the voice output of said currently visited site; the voice browser reading and complying with these permissions.

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8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the re-use of the voice personality characterisers from the previously-visited site with the currently-visited site is subject to user opt-in or opt-out.

10 9. A method according to claim 2, wherein phrasing style data is associated with said set of voice personality characterisers, the voice browser using this phrasing style data to generate text, for subsequent conversion to voice output, that expresses a specified semantic meaning in a particular style matched with the voice personality defined by the voice personality characterisers.

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10. Apparatus comprising:

- voice-service access means for accessing different voice service sites;
- voice-service presentation means for presenting the output from an accessed voice service site using a voice set by a selected set of voice personality characterisers; and
- 20 - selection means for selecting the set of voice personality characterisers to be used by the voice-service presentation means to present the currently accessed site, the selection means being operative to enable a set of voice personality characterisers associated with a previously-accessed voice service site to be selected for use in presenting a currently-visited voice service site.

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11. Apparatus according to claim 10, in the form of a voice browser for handling voice pages comprising text with embedded voice markup tags, the voice-service presentation means comprising a text-to-speech converter for generating voice output according to the selected set of voice personality characterisers.

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12. Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the text-to-speech converter is of a type using a voice tract model, said voice personality characterisers being parameter values of

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this model.

13. Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the text-to-speech converter is of a type that uses concatenation of speech elements such as phonemes, allophones, diphones or the like, these latter forming said voice personality characterisers.

14. Apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the selection means includes means for reading and complying with usage restrictions associated with a set of voice personality characterisers.

15. Apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the selection means includes means for receiving and complying with usage restrictions provided by a voice service site in respect of a set of voice personality characterisers associated with the site, these usage restrictions concerning usage of that set of voice personality characterisers for presenting the voice output of other sites.

16. Apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the selection means is operative to read and comply with usage permissions provided by a currently-visited site regarding the use of sets of voice personality characterisers associated with other sites, for presenting the voice output of said currently visited site.

17. Apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising user input means for controlling whether a set of voice personality characterisers from a previously-accessed site is re-used with the currently-accessed site.

18. Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the voice browser includes a language generator arranged to use phrasing style data associated with the selected set of voice personality characterisers to generate text, for subsequent conversion to voice output by the text-to-speech converter, that expresses a specified semantic meaning in a particular style associated matched with a voice personality defined by the selected set of voice personality characterisers.

19. A server site holding sets of voice personality characterisers for imparting particular voice personalities to the presentation of the output of voice service sites, said sets having associated usage permissions regarding use of the sets in presenting voice sites.

- 5 20. A server site according to claim 19, wherein the said usage permissions associated with a said set of voice personality characterisers, specify what voice services are permitted to use that set of voice personality characterisers.